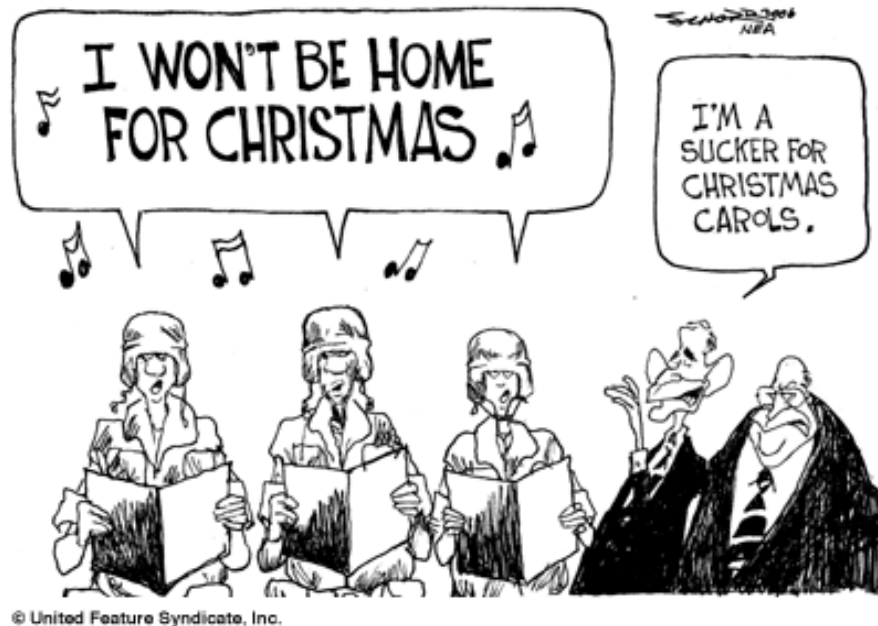


GI SPECIAL 4L19:



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

Petition: For Immediate Withdrawal Of All U.S. Troops From Iraq

[Thanks to Sherry W and Katherine GY, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

THE U.S. occupation of Iraq has not liberated the Iraqi people, but has made life worse for most Iraqis.

Tens of thousands of U.S. service people have been killed or maimed, and hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis have lost their lives as a result of the U.S. invasion in 2003, the ongoing occupation, and the violence unleashed by them.

Iraq's infrastructure has been destroyed, and U.S. plans for reconstruction abandoned. There is less electricity, less clean drinking water, and more unemployment today than before the U.S. invasion.

All of the justifications initially provided by the U.S. for waging war on Iraq have been exposed as lies; the real reasons for the invasion — to control Iraq's oil reserves and to increase U.S. strategic influence in the region — now stand revealed.

The Bush administration has insisted again and again that stability, democracy, and prosperity are around the next bend in the road. But with each day that the U.S. stays, the violence and lack of security facing Iraqis worsen.

The U.S. says that it cannot withdraw its military because Iraq will collapse into civil war if it does. But the U.S. has deliberately stoked sectarian divisions in its ongoing attempt to install a U.S.-friendly regime, thus driving Iraq towards civil war.

The November elections in the United States sent a clear message that voters reject the Iraq war, and opinion polls show that seven in 10 Iraqis want the U.S. to leave sooner rather than later. Even most U.S. military and political leaders agree that staying the course in Iraq is a policy that is bound to fail.

Yet all the various alternative plans for Iraq now being discussed in Washington, including those proposed by House and Senate Democrats, aren't about withdrawing the U.S. military from Iraq. Rather, these strategies are about continuing the pursuit of U.S. goals in Iraq and the larger Middle East using different means.

Even the proposal to redeploy U.S. troops outside of Iraq, a plan favored by many Democratic Party leaders, envisions continued U.S. intervention inside Iraq.

With former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger insisting that a military victory in Iraq is no longer possible and (Ret.) Lt. Gen. William Odom calling for "complete withdrawal" of all U.S. troops, the antiwar movement should demand no less than the immediate withdrawal of the U.S. military — as well as reparations to the Iraqi people, so they can rebuild their own society and genuinely determine their own future.

We call on the U.S. to get out of Iraq — not in six months, not in a year, but now.

Ali Abunimah
ElectronicIraq.net

Gilbert Achcar
Author
Clash of Barbarisms

Michael Albert
ZNet

Tariq Ali

Author
Bush in Babylon

Anthony Arnove
Author
Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal

Noam Chomsky
Author
Hegemony or Survival

Kelly Dougherty
Executive Director
Iraq Veterans Against the War*

Eve Ensler
Playwright
The Vagina Monologues

Eduardo Galeano
Author
The Open Veins of Latin America

Rashid Khalidi
Edward Said Professor of Arab Studies
Columbia University

Camilo Mejía
First Iraq War resister to refuse redeployment

Arundhati Roy
Author
God of Small Things

Cindy Sheehan
Gold Star Families for Peace, mother of Army Spc. Casey Sheehan, killed in Iraq

Howard Zinn
Author
A People's History of the United States

*for identification purposes only

Sign the Petition: www.ipetitions.com/petition/OutNow/

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Soldier Killed By Road Side Bomb

24 December 2006 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory
RELEASE No. 20061224-06

BAGHDAD: An improvised explosive device detonated near a Multi-National Division - Baghdad patrol, killing one Soldier southwest of the Iraqi capital Dec. 23.

The combat patrol was conducting a combat re-supply mission in order to deliver necessary supplies to units in the area. As they conducted their mission, a roadside bomb exploded near one of their vehicles, killing one Soldier.

IED Kills Baghdad Patrol Soldier; Four Wounded

24 December 2006 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp
VictoryRELEASE No. 20061224-05

BAGHDAD – An improvised explosive device detonated near a Multi-National Division - Baghdad patrol, killing one Soldier southeast of the Iraqi capital Dec. 23. As they conducted their mission, a roadside bomb exploded near one of their vehicles, killing one Soldier and wounding four others.

Body Of Local Soldier Killed In Iraq Returns Home For Final Salute

December 21, 2006 MIAMI (WSVN)

The body of one fallen soldier from South Florida arrived in Miami on Wednesday in what would be his final trip home.

Miami-Dade police, along with TSA officials, took part in a solemn farewell to Private First Class Roger Suarez-Gonzalez at Miami International Airport. The soldier lost his life in early December during a military operation in Iraq. Wednesday's somber ceremony included a 21-gun salute and water shooting over the plane that carried his body.

The body of 22-year-old Suarez-Gonzalez arrived at Miami International airport on Wednesday morning accompanied by a military escort. That escort will remain by his side on a trip back to the soldier's native country of Nicaragua, where his family mourns the loss of a beloved son and husband.

"His family back in Nicaragua is destroyed -- his mom, his grandmother," said Oscar Gonzalez, Suarez's uncle. "They are all suffering, just like me."

Gonzalez said his nephew, who was still a newlywed when he died, joined the military only a little over a month before his death. Without money to pay for a college education, the army had seemed like the only way for the young man to fulfill his dream of becoming a police officer.

Now, his family in South Florida remembers the soldier and the many ways he touched their lives. "He was a good person," Gonzalez said. "He was a hard worker and always in a good mood. He never had a bad attitude."

Suarez-Gonzalez leaves behind a wife and an entire family who say they loved him and certainly will never forget him.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



A U.S. armored vehicle patrols a road in Baghdad October 28, 2006. REUTERS/Thaier al-Sudani

Great Moments In U.S. Military History: **Pregnant Terrorist And Terrorist Kid Wiped Out In Al-Mafraq**

Dec 23 2006 ITV Network Limited.

Five people have been killed and 17 wounded, after a US air strike destroyed a house in a city north of Baghdad, according to residents.

The planes attacked the al-Mafraq area, west of Baquba.

Two women and a 4-year-old child were among the dead.

Resident Abdel Razzaq al-Azzawi said: "The (dead) one is one of my relatives. Her husband and her 4-year old child were wounded and she is pregnant.

"They destroyed the house, only my handicapped sister has survived. Our neighbour was killed and this is his body (points) and two others wounded."

TROOP NEWS

**THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



The casket of Staff Sgt. Henry W. Linck of Manhattan, Kan. at Arlington National Cemetery Dec. 18, 2006. Linck, a paratrooper, was killed by a roadside bomb in Iraq. (AP Photo/Haraz N. Ghanbari)

Silly Chief Of Staff Gen. Schoomaker Announces Plan To Foment Mutiny, Rebellion And Armed Insurrection By Reserve Troops Against The Government

Schoomaker also wants to ease Reserve call-up restrictions

12.25.06 By Gordon Lubold and Rick Maze, Army Times Staff writers [Excerpt]

[Chief of Staff Gen. Peter] Schoomaker also told the commission that he supports calls for the Pentagon to alter longstanding policies to ease restrictions on the services' ability to mobilize their reserve-component forces.

The Army National Guard and Reserve limit involuntary mobilizations for any member to 24 cumulative months.

The change Schoomaker is pushing would allow the Army, and potentially the other services, to tap their reserve forces for active duty on a far more regular basis.

1,100 From Arizona National Guard Off To Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse

December 25, 2006 Army Times

More than 1,100 Arizona National Guard soldiers will be sent to Afghanistan in January, the Defense Department said.

The 158th Infantry Regiment will send about 680 soldiers, making it the largest unit deployment yet from the Arizona Guard. They will leave Jan. 6 for training before going to Afghanistan.

The 285th Aviation Battalion will send about 450 soldiers Jan. 2. The unit is equipped with Apache attack helicopters.

IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR: December 12, 2006: San Francisco



Vets and supporters gather on SF City Hall steps [Photo by Jeff Paterson, Courage to Resist: jeff [at] paterson.net]

Indybay.org SAN FRANCISCO

Over a hundred military veterans, military family members, and supporters join Iraq War-era veterans in San Francisco to support "GI rights and resistance" to an unjust, endless war. The event, organized by Courage to Resist, with the support of Iraq Veterans Against the War, Veterans for Peace, and many other groups, was only one of dozens of similar events across the country this weekend to gather support for military objectors.



www.ivaw.org

Marine Recruiter's "Graceful Exit" From Hunter College Campus

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in.]

December 22, 2006 By Danny Katch

Yesterday there was a marine recruiter set up at a table at Hunter North. He was a young guy in uniform with a bunch of brochures spread out across the table.

My first thought was, how did this guy get a table?

A few days earlier, the ISO has set up a table and we were forced to stop by security who told us that nobody is allowed to table during finals week. It turned out that he didn't have a permit but I decided not to call security.

Instead I just asked him if he had been to Iraq (he was going to go next fall) and what he thought about the war (he said he's against it.)

So I asked him why he was trying to get more people to sign up to go to Iraq.

He claimed that while he's against the Iraq war, he likes the "other programs" the Marines have, like the military band, which he's part of.

Sure enough, some of his brochures were about the freaking band.

So I pointed out that there are many other bands in this world but that to be in the Marine one, you also have to go to war and that in fact Bush is considering sending more troops to Iraq, which involves recruiting more people to the military, just as he was doing right then and there.

At that point, he said he was going to pack up and go and that Hunter students didn't seem that interested anyways.

He started packing up and I sat down with a book at another table in Hunter North and made sure he left.

My tone during the whole conversation was laid back. I wasn't looking to get into a confrontation when I was by myself and not even a student yet on campus.

But I did mention to him that I was in the ISO and in CAN, two groups that had been involved in protesting military recruiters and he knew what I was talking about ("you're one of those people who shut down our tables" he said).

He wasn't a professional recruiter - he was a Marine cook on leave for a couple of weeks who was trying to get names to give to the real recruiters.

I think that made it easier for me to get him to leave - he wasn't looking for any trouble and probably wasn't trained in how to deal with it.

But it was still a small victory in keeping recruiters out of Hunter.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

**Guess Who Doesn't Need U.S.
Military Trainers:
Guess Who's Already Standing Up**



A insurgent soldier stands guard in central Ramadi Dec. 8, 2006. (AP Photo)

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

Sadr Militia Fight Occupation Cops In Samawa

December 23, 2006 Reuters

CLASHES between Iraqi security forces and Shi'ite militiamen associated with Moqtada al-Sadr have left five people dead and wounded 17 others in the usually calm city of Samawa, police sources said on Saturday.

The sources said fighting began on Friday afternoon when Sadr's armed militia protested against the continuous detention of their comrades by the police.

Four of the dead were policemen.

The city is now under full curfew preventing movement of vehicles and pedestrians in an attempt to calm the sudden rise of violence.

Samawa, a small Shi'ite city generally considered to be a world apart from the violence gripping central Iraq, was the first Iraqi province to be officially handed back to Iraqi control from the US-led occupation of the country.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Make 2007 The Year Of The REBEL Soldier! DIRECTORS EDITION+

Sir! No Sir! DVD



From: Sir! No Sir! Home Office
To: GI Special
Sent: December 19, 2006
Subject: New Director's Edition Sir! No Sir!

We are very pleased to announce the release of a new, Special Director's Edition DVD of Sir! No Sir! Available Now.

Along with the film, this new DVD contains over 1 1/2 hours of extra material. For only \$23.95,

This is an entire second film's worth of brand new stories from the GI Movement, then and now. It includes:

+New stories from the GI Movement including:

- ... Life and Escape from the Presidio Stockade
- ... Black GIs and "The Enemy"
- ... Indicting the government in the Winter Soldier Investigation
- ... Pirate Radio DJ Dave Rabbit!
- ... Rebellion at Fort Dix
- ... Organizing the American Serviceman's Union
- ... Vietnam GI, the first underground paper
- ... Resisters, Radicals, and Revolutionaries at Leavenworth Federal Prison
- ... Director Zeiger returns to Killeen and interviews former police chief Giacomozzi

... And many more

+Startling original footage never before on DVD:

From the '60s guerilla film collective NEWSREEL

... The historic day veterans hurled their medals onto the Capital steps

... The Oleo Strut GI Coffeehouse in the summer of '68

From the film "FTA"

... Rita Martinson's song, "Soldier, We Love You"

+Plus the new GI Movement in Iraq:

... The Court Martial of Camilo Mejia, first Iraq War resister

... Cindy Sheehan and Jane Fonda on the movement then and now

Released by Docurama, the Special Director's Edition DVD of **Sir! No Sir!** will be available December 19 at www.sirnosir.com, and in stores and on web sites everywhere.

If you have bought the Limited Edition DVD (film only) from our web site, this new DVD is an excellent complement and makes a great gift for the holidays and new year.

Still available only at www.sirnosir.com are the Limited Edition DVD (NOW ONLY \$12.95), the CD Soundtrack (\$9.95), and theatrical poster (\$8).

You can also buy the CD and poster with the new Director's Edition DVD for together for big savings.

Go to www.sirnosir.com to purchase them today.

Sir! No Sir!:
At A Theatre Near You!
To find it: <http://www.sirnosir.com/>

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing

resistance to the war, at home and inside the armed services. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

Vietnam GI

**“Vietnam GI Set A Standard Of
Excellence Unmatched In The
Underground GI Press”
“Its Target Audience Was Soldiers
In Vietnam, Not On Bases Back
Home**

From the book PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS, PEOPLE'S PRESS, by Bob Ostertag; Beacon Press, Boston, 2006.

Chapter 4, THE UNDERGROUND PRESS & THE VIETNAM WAR [Excerpt]

The year of these events, 1967, is significant.

Draftees were required to serve two years in the military, and enlistees three to four.

Combat troops were introduced into Vietnam only in 1965 and typically did one-year “tours.” Veterans speaking out in 1967 were thus among the very first veterans to return from Vietnam and muster out of the service.

Among them was a group that met at an antiwar rally in New York City in the spring and decided to form Vietnam Veterans Against the War, which would become the most important organization of the GI movement.

It is notable that these developments all occurred before the Tet offensive of early 1968, which is often seen as the beginning of the demoralization of the U.S. military in Vietnam.

[Jeff] Sharlet was struggling at college in Bloomington. At twenty-five, Sharlet was older than most students, having already completed two tours of duty in Vietnam.

He had seen a lot. The army had noticed that Sharlet was a smart kid and taught him Vietnamese before assigning him to intelligence. In 1963 he was in Saigon during the CIA backed coup that overthrew South Vietnamese president Ngo Diem. Later he did top-secret work monitoring, decoding, and translating North Vietnamese radio transmissions.

And everywhere he went, he spoke about the war to everyone he could, in Vietnamese. In 1964 he returned to the United States firmly opposed to the war.

Soon he was the chair of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) chapter at Indiana University but was also increasingly critical of the “shallowness and snotty attitude” of the student movement, which he felt made it ineffective.

“The chemistry was not working too well,” remembers Thomas Barton, a conscientious objector who was also a student in Bloomington. “He just didn’t feel like he fit in.... Jeff wanted to do a newsletter for people back in Vietnam.”

He spent a summer in New York City working with the newly formed Vietnam Veterans Against the War, then enrolled for graduate school at the University of Chicago.

He stayed at school one day — just long enough to pick up his Woodrow Wilson Scholarship check, which he used to launch Vietnam GI in January 1968.

Vietnam GI set a standard of excellence unmatched in the underground GI press.

It was also unique in that its target audience was soldiers in Vietnam, not on bases back home. “Jeff still had friends getting shot at; these were for them,” says Barton.

By August the paper had grown into two editions, the main Vietnam edition and a second, “Stateside” edition addressing GI issues on domestic bases.

Sharlet traveled constantly, visiting military bases and recruiting GIs willing to write for the paper or distribute it. Production of the paper was handled by a group of about a dozen volunteers in Chicago.

Distribution to Vietnam, however, was done by mail, according to procedures carefully designed to avoid the attention of military authorities.

Bundles were sent to civilian committees and individual GIs around the country. The local group would then mail the papers to soldiers in Vietnam, in a plain brown wrapper with an inconspicuous return address, such as the Presbyterian Pen Pal Club. The return addresses had to be changed constantly to avoid detection by authorities.

Using fake return addresses would have simplified things, but the addresses had to be valid.

Soldiers' addresses in Vietnam were good for only short periods of time, and postage to Vietnam was costly, so it was crucial that the organizers receive notice when a soldier's address went out of date.

Arranging a constantly changing series of valid return addresses from which the organizers could collect mail was their only option. The complete address list was a secret that only the core people in Chicago had access to.

Vietnam GI's content was even more extraordinary than its production and distribution.

The tabloid was written entirely by vets and soldiers, "from the point of view of the grunt," remembers GI activist Dave Cline. It never strayed from the voice of the GI on the ground who was concerned about his buddies first and who always spoke from immediate experience.

Each issue led with a long, thoughtful interview with a GI who was either just back from Vietnam or had recently been involved in an act of resistance.

The second issue featured such an interview with Pete Martinsen, frankly discussing torturing Vietnamese prisoners with beatings and electric shocks.

"I never dug beating up women. I saw it done a lot of times and even did it myself a couple of times." Martinsen reflected on how ineffective interrogations were: "It was a real victory if we got any information at all."

"When we first moved into our area, the Vietnamese were about 50—50 for and against us. Not really extremely against us and not really extremely for us. Just a "wait-and-see" attitude.

"Then people started getting killed indiscriminately by Americans, all the girls turned into whores, the men into pimps, the kids into thieves and beggars. Long Khanh Province was more against us when I left than it was when I came in. We did this, not the VC."

The same issue featured an insightful letter from a medic with the First Infantry Division:

"I thought of all the oddities I'd seen since coming here. The things I couldn't understand, and couldn't believe.... The new Americanized, uplifted people! Living in fallen shacks made of flattened beer cans and scrap wood, riding Honda motorcycles. The begging children who fought viciously over a Hershey bar we won't even eat....

"Beautiful young girls turned into prostitutes for the American GI "Joe." The disgusting treatment of the people by the average GI, taking his animosities for being here out on them...

"It's a strange, beautiful, untouched land. I'm sickened by it, because I'm forced to it. I'm learning from it. Finding I want no others here. I only want my fellow Americans in one war. The war at home. The war for peace."

The paper had a letters section, but apart from the lead interview and an editorial, the entire paper was made up of letters. “Articles” were often simply letters that the editors had decided to top with a headline.

“We know that war is ugly all the way around. But too much really brutal shit goes on in Nam, and the responsibility for this goes right to the Brass.”

“Troops who are serving in the III Corps probably heard that the 2/27th Inf. (“Wolfhounds”) is a pretty tough outfit. Well and good. But they also have a rep as an outfit that takes damn few prisoners back. If you don’t know why, you should hear it.

“Going into the field, 2nd Bn. CCs pass the order down that if any man takes a Vietnamese alive, he is personally responsible for that prisoner’s security and well-being.

“In other words, that troop must feed the prisoner out of his own rations, guard him, and personally transport him back to base camp. Since the 2nd Bn. is often in the field as long as 30 or 40 days, this order is telling the men to kill all prisoners.

“If the Brass want troops to kill prisoners and stray civilians, then they should tell the American people that this is their policy. Of course, that is asking the Brass to openly take responsibility for the dirty side of war like men.”

“As we well know most officers don’t have the guts to do that.”

What is most extraordinary is how the paper managed to remain unflinching in its opposition to the war while positioning itself as the key forum for uncensored discussion among GIs with an exceedingly diverse range of views.

Vietnam GI never limited its pages to views that its editors agreed with.

The May 1968 issue led with an interview with George H. Travis, who was wounded twice and despite being active duty asked that his name be used.

“If they want to win this war they should go on and win it instead of babying around. I really feel that if the Vietnamese that we are fighting had the equipment we have we would just lose automatically because they’re messing us up pretty good already.”

The following month’s paper interviewed a door gunner on a chopper:

“Q: How do you feel toward the anti-war movement?”

“A: You mean the peace creeps? Well, I think most of them are just trying to stay out of the Army; they don’t want to go to Nam. But I think the guys who are running the show really believe in what they are doing.... But I don’t blame them. If I knew then what I do now, I’d be in Canada.”

That summer the paper printed a letter from a GI who wrote, "I am for staying and kicking Charlie's ass. I have lost too many friends to see it all wasted. I am thankful that I'm still in one hunk and still can look at both sides."

The respectful editor's comment that followed demonstrates why Vietnam GI continued to be the place where GIs chose to air their thoughts:

"There's a lot of truth and honesty in what you say. Every time we lose someone to Charlie we want to do something about it. We're men, and we don't forget our own. But what should we do about the politicians back home who sent us into this stinking war? Are we man enough to settle our score with them?"

"SINCERELY, JEFF SHARLET"

The third issue included a letter from retired brigadier general Hugh B. Hester:

I strongly feel that anyone who has studied thoroughly the background and conduct of this war, as I have, and who has reached the conclusion, as I have, that the war is in violation of the basic interests of the American people, is not an enemy of our people when he refuses to accept service in Vietnam. On the contrary he is exercising his loyalty to our people in its finest form."

Even more remarkable than the fact that a retired brigadier general was endorsing mutiny was the fact that he chose Vietnam GI as the venue to state this opinion, for the same paper was running letters from grunts like the following:

"As for Vietnam, all I can say is we're wrong for being here, no one knows what we're fighting for or who we're fighting against.

"The only true picture you get is that we are fighting every gook over here as all of them hate us and will go to no end to get the best of us. There is no loyalty or appreciation given to us for helping their shitty cause (whatever it is), all there is are gooks (young and old, men and women) planning and scheming to cut our throats so they can take our money and possessions.

"With all this going on they condemn a man for getting stoned occasionally. I would hate to think of being stuck in this shit hole for a whole year without the effects of hallucinogens to help me carry through it all, though don't get me wrong, as a hobby not a crutch."

The delicate balancing act Vietnam GI was performing was graphically and horrifyingly presented in a large photo in the May 1968 issue, showing a GI with a maniacal grin holding the heads of two Vietnamese he had just decapitated. The boldface caption read:

"The above picture shows exactly what the brass want you to do in the Nam. The reason for printing this picture is not to put down G.I.'s, but rather to illustrate the fact that the Army can really fuck over your mind if you let it.

"It's up to you, you can put in your time just trying to make it back in one piece or you can, become a psycho like the Lifer (E-6) in the picture who really digs this kind of shit. It's your choice."

In a very short time, the expanding reach of Vietnam GI enabled it to publish more sophisticated assignments, like a spread in that same May 1968 issue which showed two articles by the same person: one written for the Army Observer and the other for Vietnam GI.

In the second article, the author described how he had been made to lie when writing for the army paper.

As opposition to the war among the troops became more widespread, the editors of Vietnam GI kept abreast of the practical concerns that came with this development:

"A growing percentage of GIs are finding themselves in a position in which they may very well have to spend some time in a military brig or stockade. The purpose of this article will be to acquaint you with the conditions in a number of Navy and Marine Corps Brigs. Moreover, we hope to give you a few tips toward making your stay in confinement a bit easier to hack."

The Vietnam GI reached a peak circulation of about ten thousand. But after just one year of publishing, Sharlet started to visibly tire.

Friends didn't think he looked well.

During an organizing trip in Florida, he checked into a VA hospital and died soon after.

He was twenty-seven years old.

The official cause of death was cancer, but vets who worked with him believe his death was caused by exposure to Agent Orange. Vietnam GI never recovered from his loss and published its last issue in June 1970.

Barton sums up Vietnam GI's extraordinary run:

"The truth of the paper was in the letters to the editor. These came in from all over South Vietnam and were a barometer of the paper's extraordinary reach, and the importance it held for those who read it,"

One such letter reads:

"Gentlemen:

"It seems like every time you put a new issue out I have six or seven guys who want subscriptions after ripping my copy to shreds.

"Right now it's an even-money bet which is more popular in our unit, Playboy or Vietnam GI..."

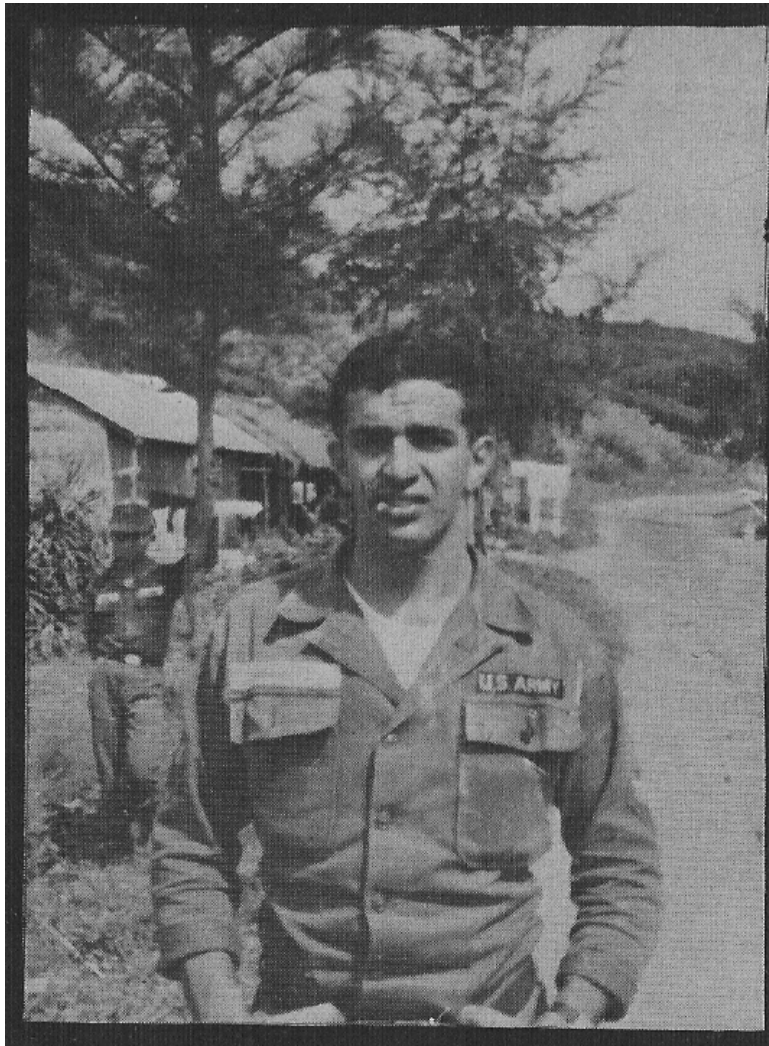
Enclosed are several more names for subscriptions.

—P CF,
198TH LIGHT INFANTRY”

MORE:

Vietnam GI

Jeff Sharlet Dies



VIETNAM GI

August 1969

Many good men never came back from Nam. Some came back disabled in mind. Jeff Sharlet came back a pretty together cat--and he came back angry. Jeff started VGI, and for almost two years poured his life into it, in an endless succession of 18-hour days trying to organize men to fight for their own rights.

On Monday, June 16th, at 2:45 pm, Jeff died in the Miami VA Hospital. He died of a sudden heart failure, brought on by the uncontrollable growth of the cancer that had earlier destroyed his kidney. There was no way to save him. He was only 27 years old.

Rather than wait for the draft, like so many others Jeff went RA. With dreams of seeing Europe, he applied for "translator-interpreter", and found himself at the US Army Language School at Monterey, California. But instead of French, Czech or German, he was assigned a strange language called "Vietnamese"--. spoken in a country he couldn't even find on the map. For eleven months in 1962 he was drilled in Vietnamese.

In 1963 he was assigned to Army Security Agency, and left for his first tour in Nam. Stationed in Saigon awhile, Jeff witnessed the ARVN coup that overthrew Saigon dictator Ngo Diem. On his second tour his ASA unit was stationed near Phu Bai. Engaged in top-secret work monitoring, decoding and translating North Vietnamese radio messages, they wore AF uniforms and worked at a small air base. But every time they went into the bars, every bargirl could reel off all the facts about their mission.

Speaking the language well, Jeff could talk to many Vietnamese about what was happening to their country. He spent long hours questioning ex-Foreign Legion men, who'd settled in Vietnam after the French left, peasants, ARVN officers, students, and even suspected VC agents. By the time he ETSed in July, 1964 he'd put a lot of pieces together.

Jeff went back to school, and got his college degree (with honors) from Indiana University in 1967. During his "GI Bill years" he joined the peace movement, and became chairman of his local chapter of Students for a Democratic Society. But he had become increasingly disillusioned about the student movement, and felt that its shallowness and snotty attitude towards other people made it ineffective.

That summer he went to New York City to work with Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and it was there that he decided to try to organize other GIs to fight the brass. Jeff had won a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship for graduate study at the University of Chicago. He enrolled and" picked up his check. From then on all his time and money were sunk into starting a newspaper for servicemen.

After two years of endless traveling, fund-raising and writing, Jeff's drive started to fade. That restless energy that had brought him countless miles to base after base wasn't there. After his last trip to Ft. Hood in the Fall of 1968, Jeff complained that he was really beat, burnt out. We all agreed that he should go "on leave" and take a rest.

It was while visiting friends in Boston that the first really severe pains started. Jeff flew home to Florida, and entered the hospital. From there it was steadily downhill all the way. The removal of his left kidney, massive radiation treatments, drugs--nothing stopped the growth of his cancer. At the end he was weak and emaciated, without

enough breath in his lungs to speak for more than a few sentences. He said that he had many new ideas for our fight, but was just too exhausted to talk about them.

Jeff was a truly rare man. He was our friend and comrade, and those of us who came together in this fight will never forget him. VGI, the paper that so many readers called "the truth paper," will go on fighting.

OCCUPATION REPORT



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send to contact@militaryproject.org:. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential. Same to unsubscribe.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**“Since The Elections Of November 7
The Democratic Leadership Has**

Rallied To The Notion Of A ‘Surge’ In U.S. Troops In Iraq”



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

A poll cited by the Iraq Study Group found that 61 percent of Iraqis believe that it is appropriate where possible to attack the US occupying troops. Since the poll included Kurds, who are less hostile to the US presence, we can assume that the percentage of Sunnis and Shiites who think it a patriotic act to shoot or blow up a US soldier is well above 61 percent. Now imagine yourself as a US trainer embedded in an Iraqi unit, the vast majority of whose members believe it right and proper to kill you.

December 19, 2006 By ALEXANDER COCKBURN, CounterPunch [Excerpts]

This last Sunday Harry Reid, the incoming Democratic majority leader in the US Senate, went on ABC's Sunday morning show and declared that a hike in U.S. troops in Iraq is okay with him.

Here's the evolution of the Democrats' war platform since November 7, 2006, the day the voters presented a clear mandate: "End the war! Get out of Iraq!" and took the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives away from the Republicans.

So somewhat to their surprise the Democrats recaptured both the Senate and the House.

Then they went to work--to obliterate the mandate.

Then Nancy Pelosi, chose Silvestre Reyes as House Intelligence Committee chairman.

Reyes promptly told Newsweek, "We're not going to have stability in Iraq until we eliminate those militias, those private armies. We have to consider the need for additional troops to be in Iraq, to take out the militias and stabilize Iraq. I would say 20,000 to 30,000-for the specific purpose of making sure those militias are dismantled, working in concert with the Iraqi military."

Back in 2003 Reyes, a Vietnam vet, was opposed to the war. Give him clout as Intelligence Committee chair and he starts citing John McCain approvingly, even upping the mad Arizonan's troop-boost call by 10,000.

Then, on December 17 the Democrats' Senate leader, Harry Reid, said it was okay with him to send more troops to Iraq.

This was the same Sunday morning that Colin Powell, appearing on CBS, said a troop increase "cannot be sustained" and that the thousands of additional U.S. soldiers sent into Baghdad since the summer had been unable to stabilize the city and more probably could not tip the balance, Powell said.

Yesterday, it was instructive to go to the Democratic websites in the wake of Reid's statement. Nothing on Daily Kos, nothing on Truthout, nothing on any of them. They had many words about Republican warmongering, about McCain's call for more troops.

About Reid, one of the top Democratic leaders, about the evolving Democratic posture--nothing.

The language is always of pleasing schedules, in which a (fictional) entity called the Iraqi Army, at the disposition of an (imaginary) power called the Iraqi government, can be welded into an (entirely fantastical) nonsectarian force by (as yet unavailable and putatively suicidal) US military trainers.

Suicidal?

A poll cited by the Iraq Study Group found that 61 percent of Iraqis believe that it is appropriate where possible to attack the US occupying troops. Since the poll included Kurds, who are less hostile to the US presence, we can assume that the percentage of Sunnis and Shiites who think it a patriotic act to shoot or blow up a US soldier is well above 61 percent.

Now imagine yourself as a US trainer embedded in an Iraqi unit, the vast majority of whose members believe it right and proper to kill you.

"Suicidal" seems to be the correct term.

These calls for a bigger US training force are complete hokum.

Otherwise fantasy rules in Congress and the press, which has consistently misrepresented the extent of the disaster in Iraq, preferring to promote fatal illusions about a viable central government and fantasies of the US being able to shape a new model army of Iraqis.

Since the elections of November 7, elite liberal consensus, as represented by the Democratic leadership and major opinion formers such as the editors of the New York Times, has rallied to the notion of a "surge" in U.S. troops in Iraq.

"Surge" is a handy word. It has the timbre of forceful majesty, of mighty ocean rollers roaring onto a beach. It also has the promise of withdrawal, since what surges can also recedes.

(Today, the Washington Post reports that inside the Pentagon growing opposition to the surge scenario. presumably on the reasonable grounds that there aren't the troops to mount the surge and it would do nothing to alter the situation anyway.)

The Democratic leadership -- Pelosi, Reid, Emanuel, Biden -- is recommending that the Democrats in Congress vote to approve the supplemental budget appropriation early next year, probably \$160 billion, which will give Bush enough money to keep the war going till he leaves town.

Enough Democrats have always been available to push these appropriations through, sometimes by huge majorities or, in the Senate, unanimous agreement.

Here's the record of shame:

By 2004, when it was clear a disaster was unfolding and after Iraq's alleged WMDs had been exposed as frauds invented by US and British intelligence agencies and the press: HR 4613 -- Final House Vote July 22, 2004: 410-12. Final Senate Vote July 22, 2004: 96-0.

In 2005, by which time it was clear that the US attack had spawning civil war, plus staggering corruption -- HR 1268: Final House Vote May 5, 2005: 368-58. Final Senate Vote May 10, 2005: 100-0. HR 2863: Final House Vote December 19, 2005: 308-106. Final Senate Vote December 21, 2005: 93-0.

By 2006 the American people were turning decisively against the war. Bush's ratings were among the lowest in presidential history. Up came HR 4939: Final House Vote June 13, 2006: 351-67. Final Senate Vote June 15, 2006: 98-1. HR 5631 -- Final House Vote September 26, 2006: 394-22. Final Senate Vote September 29, 2006: 100-0.

Years ago, my father used to tell me that when it came to assessing the likely policy of the British Labor Party, the best approach was to figure out the worst option available, and then proceed under the assumption that this was the course the Party would adopt.

Here in the U.S. I've always applied this useful journalistic rule to the Democrats, with unflinching success. Never for a moment, after November 7, did I doubt that Reid and the others would do the wrong thing.

As we warned after the election, the role of the Democrats will be to ease through a troop increase. This prediction has turned out to be 100 per cent accurate.

Now comes the chance to see whether the antiwar movement, the progressive Democrats, will meekly toe the line, even as some start wasting their time promoting a Kucinich bid for the Democratic nomination, which will exactly the same effect as did his bid in 2004.

It was clear from the outset that the only substantive function of Kucinich's run was to try to preempt defections to a Third Party candidate such as Nader.

Then, in Boston, Kucinich toed the line and fell in behind Kerry.

Once again doomed to fail, he'll do the same thing in 2008.



Of course I'm against the war – but I'm a Democrat first last and always.

I'll use my anti-war position just as I did in 2004; to prevent any serious bid from Nader or the Greens.

“The word is unity. That is the operative word.” -D. Kucinich

[December 23 by John A. Murphy]

CLASS WAR REPORTS

“All I Want For Christmas Is For The Government To Fall”

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

December 23, 2006 By Iman Azzi, Daily Star staff

BEIRUT: On the sixth day of anti-government demonstrations in Beirut, a protester decorated a Christmas tree in over-sized orange ornaments to represent the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), an ally of Hizbullah.

On the 18th day of anti-government demonstrations in Beirut the protest organizers lit the national Christmas tree, an honor previously reserved for government employees.

And on the 25th day of anti-government demonstrations in Beirut, Lebanese Christians - estimated to be a third of the population - and some holiday-happy Muslims will celebrate Christmas (Jesus is Islam's most revered prophet after Mohammad).

Santa's sleigh has an extra stop this year as protesters gear up for the celebration, combining holiday cheer with political activism.

"All I want for Christmas is for the government to fall," said Milad Deeb, 23, a Christian supporter of the FPM who has lived in a tent since demonstrations began. "I think that's all anyone here wants."

The demonstrations, which began with a mass rally of several hundred thousand people on December 1, have lost many of the supporters from the initial rallies. Those remaining aren't letting the holidays interfere with their demands and have decided to stay.

The Western-supported government has dug its heels in. Cabinet members have opted to sleep in Parliament. Lebanese Premier Fouad Siniora's supporters claim he has received verbal expressions of support from most countries.

With the government locked in and the protesters camping out, the situation appears to have hit a political stalemate, and most believe a solution will not occur before 2007.

"At first we wanted the government to resign but now I want new elections," said Mary Harfouch, 22. "That would be the best Christmas present."

Harfouch and other opposition supporters complain that the government no longer represents Lebanon: **"Let them test their popularity in the polls, not the streets."**

"Usually Christmas is shared with our close family but this is the first time we can share the holiday with our large family. As if being here could destroy Christmas. It's making Christmas better because we can be with everyone we love," said Harfouch.

Arabic and English Christmas carols play over a loudspeaker behind Harfouch and her brother Boudi, 18, shuffled in the mix with political speeches and Hizbullah's greatest hits.

The siblings took a brief respite from Tuesday's demonstration to shop for presents at ABC in Achrafieh.

But another shopper at ABC, Mary Christine Boulos, 35, was busy finishing her shopping and trying her best to ignore the political demonstrations. "At first we were upset about the demonstrations but now it doesn't bother me. They don't deserve to disturb my Christmas," Boulos said.

Around her, Christmas trees stood at the base of the escalators as strings of snowflakes dangled from the ceiling. A robotic Santa waved to children and employees wore Santa hats.

"I'm celebrating as if nothing was happening. For Christmas this country needs all new leadership, a complete new set," Boulos concluded.



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

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